



# DARK NIGHTS

1

# BATMAN™

## THE DROWNED

DARK NIGHTS  
**THE DROWNED**  
TIE-IN

Abnett  
Tan  
White







THE ONLY WORLD I'VE  
EVER KNOWN SINKS  
INTO THE DARKNESS  
BELOW ME FOREVER.

AS DOES THE ONLY  
LOVE I'VE EVER KNOWN.  
BUT SYLVESTER DIED A  
LONG TIME BEFORE MY  
WORLD DID.

I FOUGHT HARD TO CLING  
ON AND KEEP IT AFLOAT  
AFTER SYLVESTER'S DEATH,  
BUT IT COULDN'T BE SAVED.

IT'S TIME TO LET  
GO. TO ACCEPT.

AND GO  
UP...

...TOWARD  
THE LIGHT.

THE MOCKING LIGHT.  
THE DAMNED LIGHT.

THE  
SURFACE.

PROTECTING MY WORLD  
WAS AN OBSESSION  
THAT CONSUMED ME.

BY THE END, IT WAS LIKE  
TRYING TO TREAD WATER IN  
THE NUMBING COLD WHEN  
YOU'RE EXHAUSTED.

SPPSSSHHHH

BETTER JUST  
TO DROWN.



DROWN  
IT ALL.

CRASH

THE LIGHT HURTS  
MY EYES. I'M  
NOT USED TO IT.

I HATE THE LIGHT.  
IT'S TO BLAME  
FOR EVERYTHING.

I USED TO THINK THAT  
SYLVESTER HAD GONE  
UP INTO THE LIGHT.

STUPID.

NAIVE.

MY LOVE ISN'T  
HERE AND THIS ISN'T  
A BETTER PLACE.

THE ONE WHO LAUGHS  
TOLD ME THIS TOWN IS  
CALLED AMNESTY BAY.

AMNESTY. A CLEAN  
SLATE. A CHANCE  
FOR A DO-OVER...

...A CHANCE TO  
WASH IT ALL AWAY  
AND START AGAIN.





MY WORLD WAS NEVER  
A GOOD PLACE. IT WAS  
BRUTAL AND CORRUPT.

MY WHOLE LIFE, I FOUGHT TO MAKE  
IT BETTER--EVEN AFTER THE ROGUE  
METAS TOOK SYLVESTER KYLE FROM ME.

I THOUGHT IT WAS  
AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL.

BUT I WAS WASTING MY  
TIME, BECAUSE MY WORLD  
COULD NEVER BE REDEEMED.

I KNOW NOW MY EARTH  
WAS A LOWER-TIER WORLD.  
MALFORMED AND BROKEN.

ONE OF MANY  
CURSED TO ROT  
AND SINK.



BECAUSE OF  
THE LIGHT. THE  
LIGHT UP HERE.

NO WONDER I  
COULDN'T SAVE IT  
DESPITE ALL MY  
SACRIFICES.

THE LIGHT IS WHERE  
THINGS ARE GOOD  
AND WHOLE. HERE,  
LIFE PROSPERS.

AND IT PROSPERS AT THE  
EXPENSE OF WORLDS IN  
THE LOWER TIER--LIKE MINE.

WE DECAY  
AND FALL SO  
IT CAN LIVE.

WE SUFFER SO  
IT CAN THRIVE.





NOT ANY  
MORE.

CALL THIS AN ACT OF  
PIRACY. THE "HAVE-NOTS"  
TAKING WHAT THEY NEED  
FROM THE "HAVES."

THE  
DISENFRANCHISED  
SEEKING REDRESS.  
A SEIZURE OF GOODS.  
A RESTORATION OF  
BALANCE.

CALL IT WHAT YOU  
DAMN WELL LIKE.



THIS PLACE, THIS  
LIGHT, THIS AMNESTY  
BAY, THIS WORLD...

...IT'S WHAT  
I'M OWED.

MY NAME IS  
BRYCE WAYNE,  
AND I'M HERE  
TO TAKE IT.

PAYMENT  
IN FULL.



OF COURSE,  
THERE WILL BE  
RESISTANCE...

I DON'T  
KNOW WHAT  
THE HELL YOU  
ARE--



I EXPECTED THAT.

--BUT  
THIS STOPS  
NOW.

MERA--

RIGHT  
BESIDE YOU,  
ARTHUR.

TAKE THIS  
MONSTER  
DOWN!

These are the stories from  
the Dark Multiverse that  
should NEVER be...

...Witness the rise of  
the Dark Knights...

# BATMAN THE DROWNED

## in *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

DAN ABNETT WRITER PHILIP TAN & TYLER KIRKHAM ARTISTS DEAN WHITE & ARIF PRIANTO COLORS

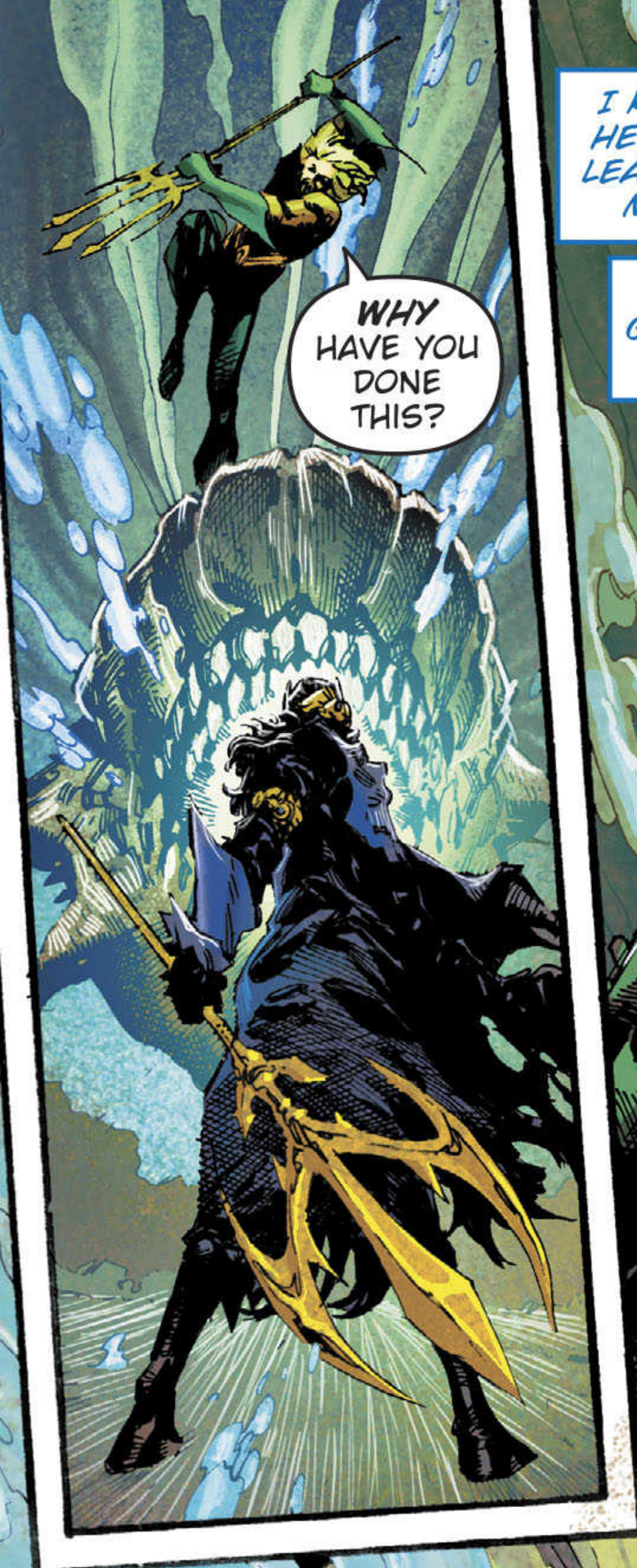
TOM NAPOLITANO LETTERS JASON FABOK AND BRAD ANDERSON COVER

JESSICA CHEN ASSOCIATE EDITOR PAUL HAMINSKI EDITOR EDDIE BERGANZA GROUP EDITOR

SPECIAL THANKS TO SCOTT SNYDER, GREG CAPULLO AND JAMES TYNION IV

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER





WHY  
HAVE YOU  
DONE  
THIS?

I KNOW WHO  
HE IS...OR AT  
LEAST WHO HE  
MUST BE.

AN AQUAMAN.  
GENDER ROLES ARE  
REVERSED HERE.



BUT HE  
IS SLOW...



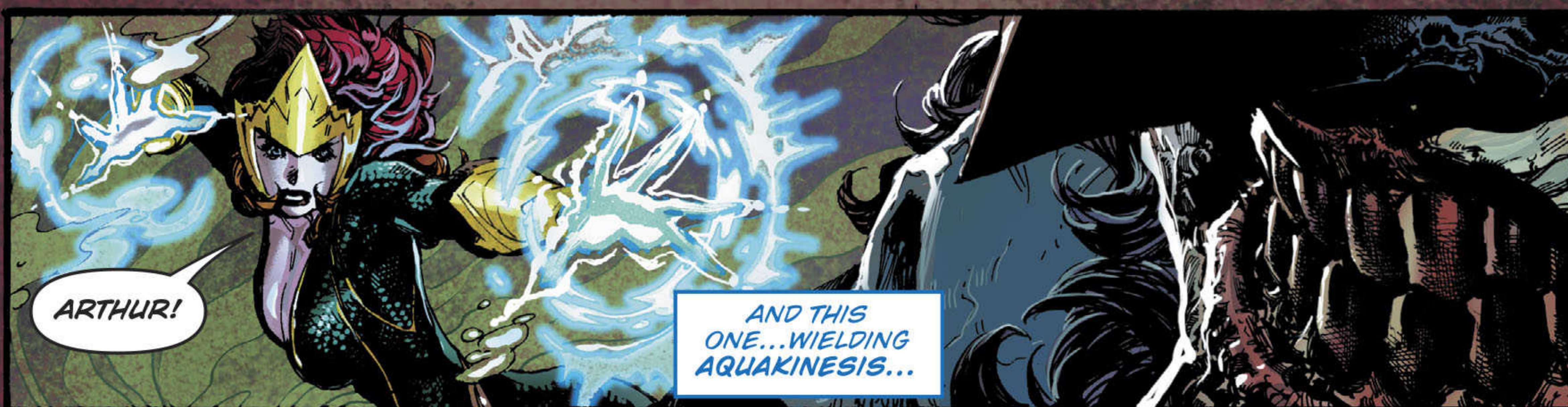
WHAT?

KRRUN  
HIT



...AND  
WEAK.

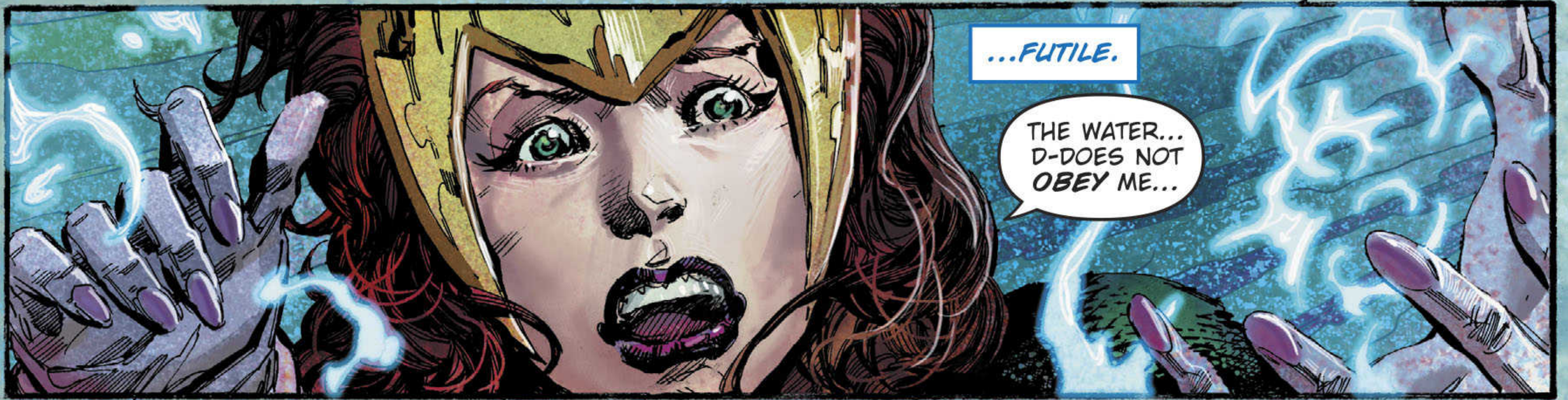
WHUN  
HIT



ARTHUR!

AND THIS  
ONE...WIELDING  
AQUAKINESIS...





...FUTILE.

THE WATER...  
D-DOES NOT  
OBEY ME...



UGHNN!

MY  
WATER. MY  
RULES.

HE COMES  
FOR ME AGAIN.

HE'S NOT  
HOLDING BACK.



THAT'S  
FINE.

I'VE FOUGHT AND  
KILLED PLENTY OF  
ATLANTEANS BEFORE...



# EARTH-11

...SINCE THEY  
FIRST APPEARED  
ON MY WORLD,  
YEARS AGO.

IT WAS EIGHTEEN  
MONTHS AFTER  
I'D HUNTED DOWN  
THE LAST OF THE  
ROGUE METAS AND  
AVENGED SYLVESTER.

I THOUGHT I'D  
FINALLY MADE MY  
WORLD SAFE.

BUT NO, HERE THEY  
WERE, LED BY THEIR QUEEN--  
AQUAWOMAN--EMERGING  
FROM THE SECRET PLACES  
OF THE SEA AFTER YEARS  
OF SELF-IMPOSED EXILE.

CLAIMING THEY  
CAME IN PEACE.

BUT I  
KNEW  
BETTER.

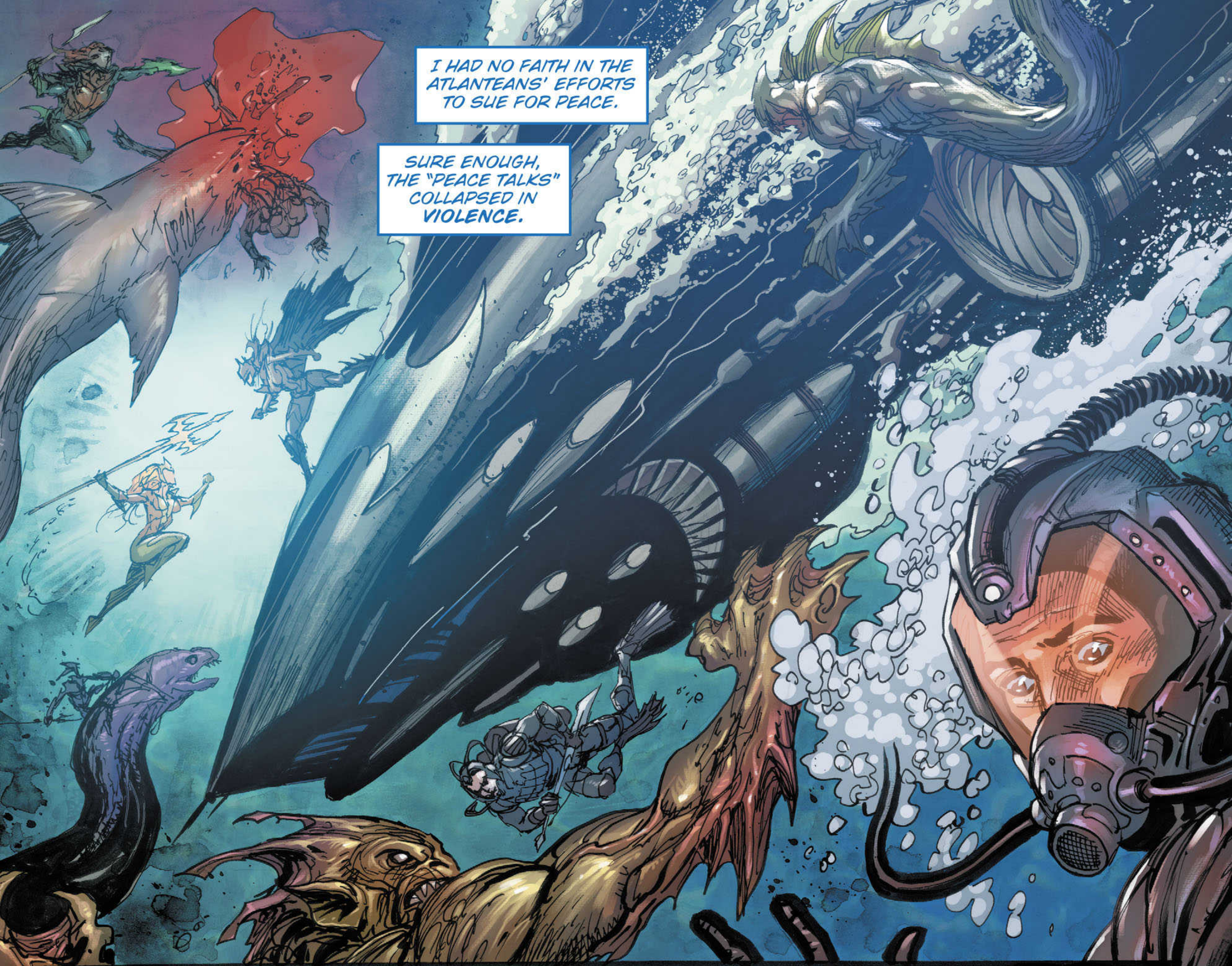
JUST MORE ROGUE  
METAS. A THREAT THAT  
MENACES EVERYTHING  
WE HELD DEAR.

I COULD FEEL  
IT IN MY GUT.

I DON'T TRUST  
ANYONE, BUT I TRUST  
MY GUT INSTINCT.

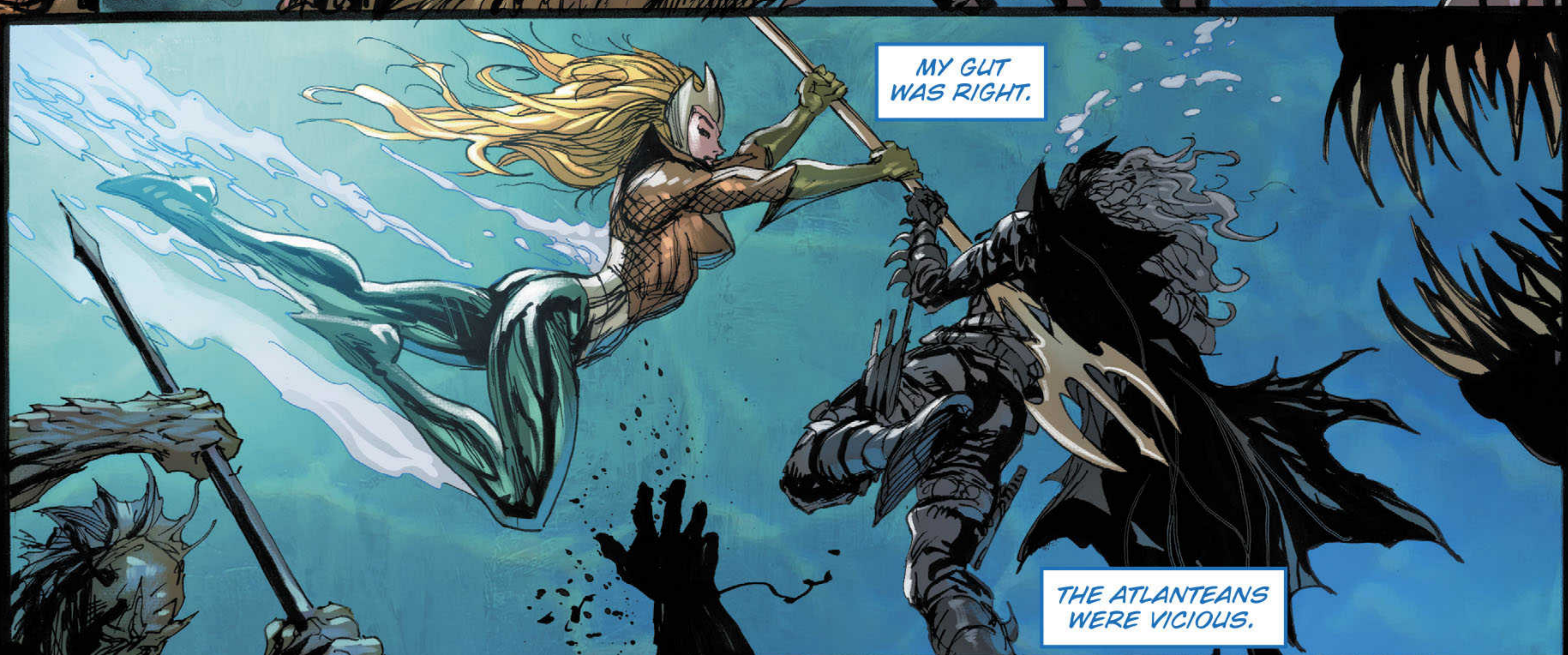
LIKE I TRUST MY ABILITY TO  
PROTECT THE INNOCENT.





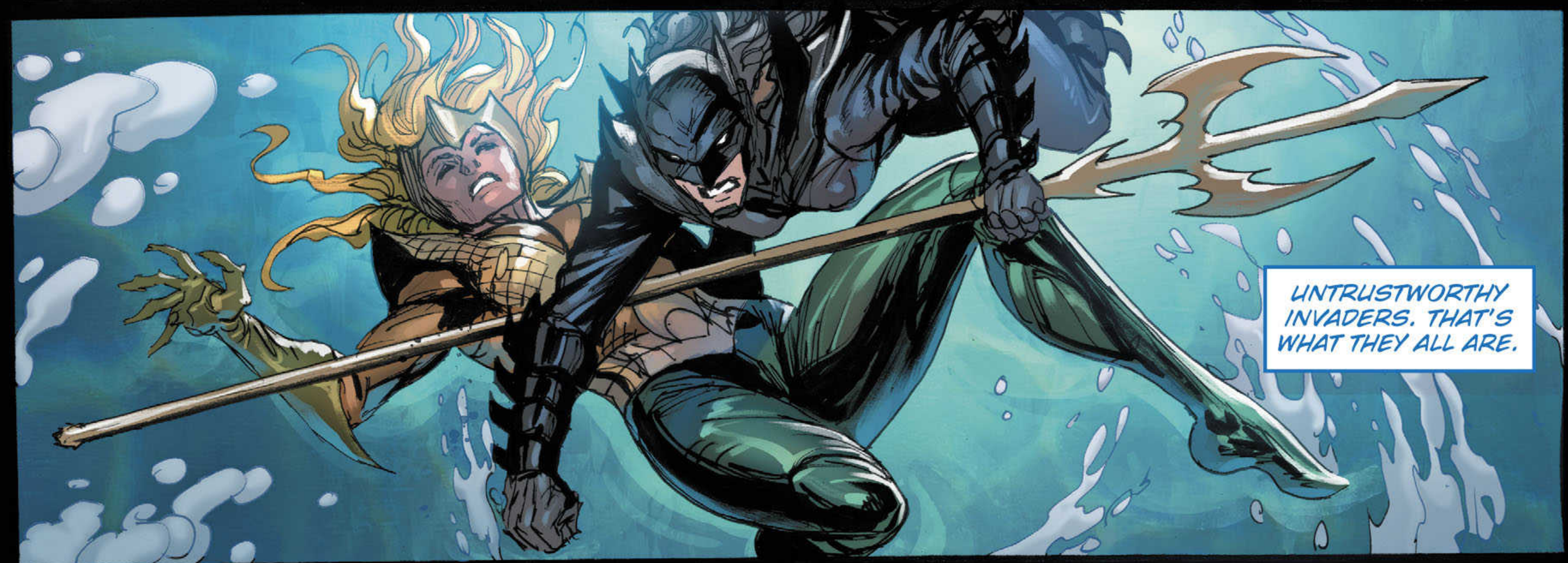
I HAD NO FAITH IN THE ATLANTEANS' EFFORTS TO SUE FOR PEACE.

SURE ENOUGH, THE "PEACE TALKS" COLLAPSED IN VIOLENCE.



MY GUT WAS RIGHT.

THE ATLANTEANS WERE VICIOUS.



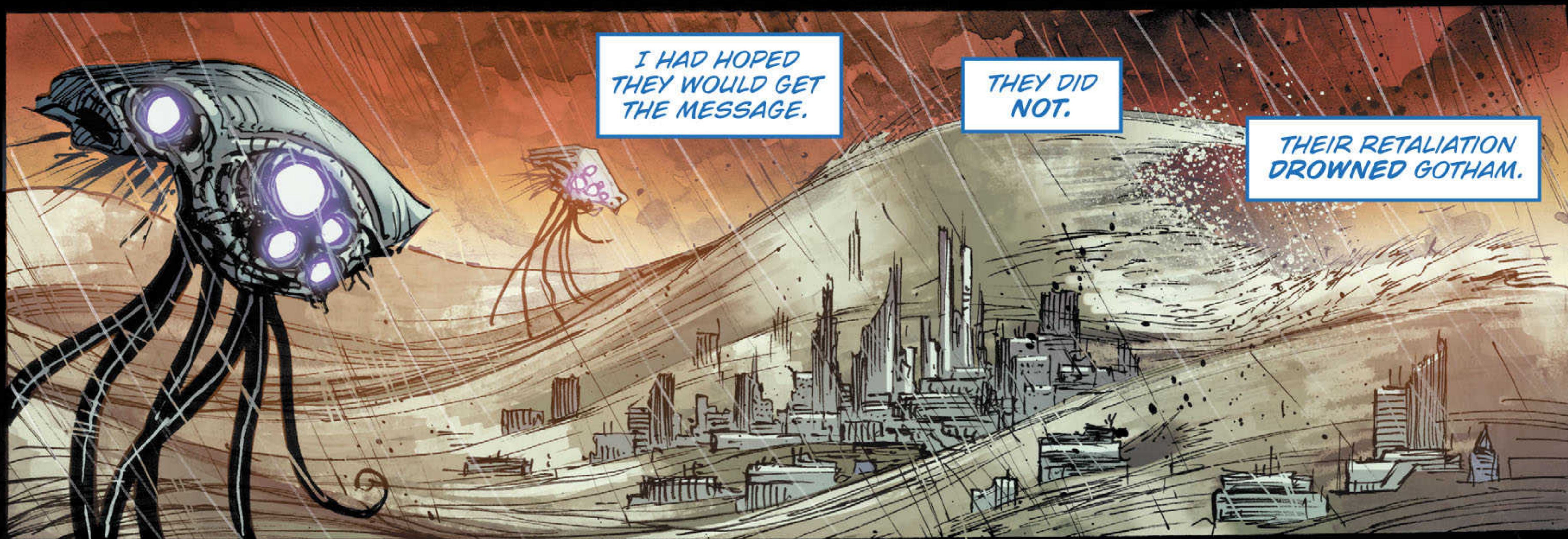
UNTRUSTWORTHY INVADERS. THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL ARE.



SO I REDEFINED  
VICIOUS FOR THEM.



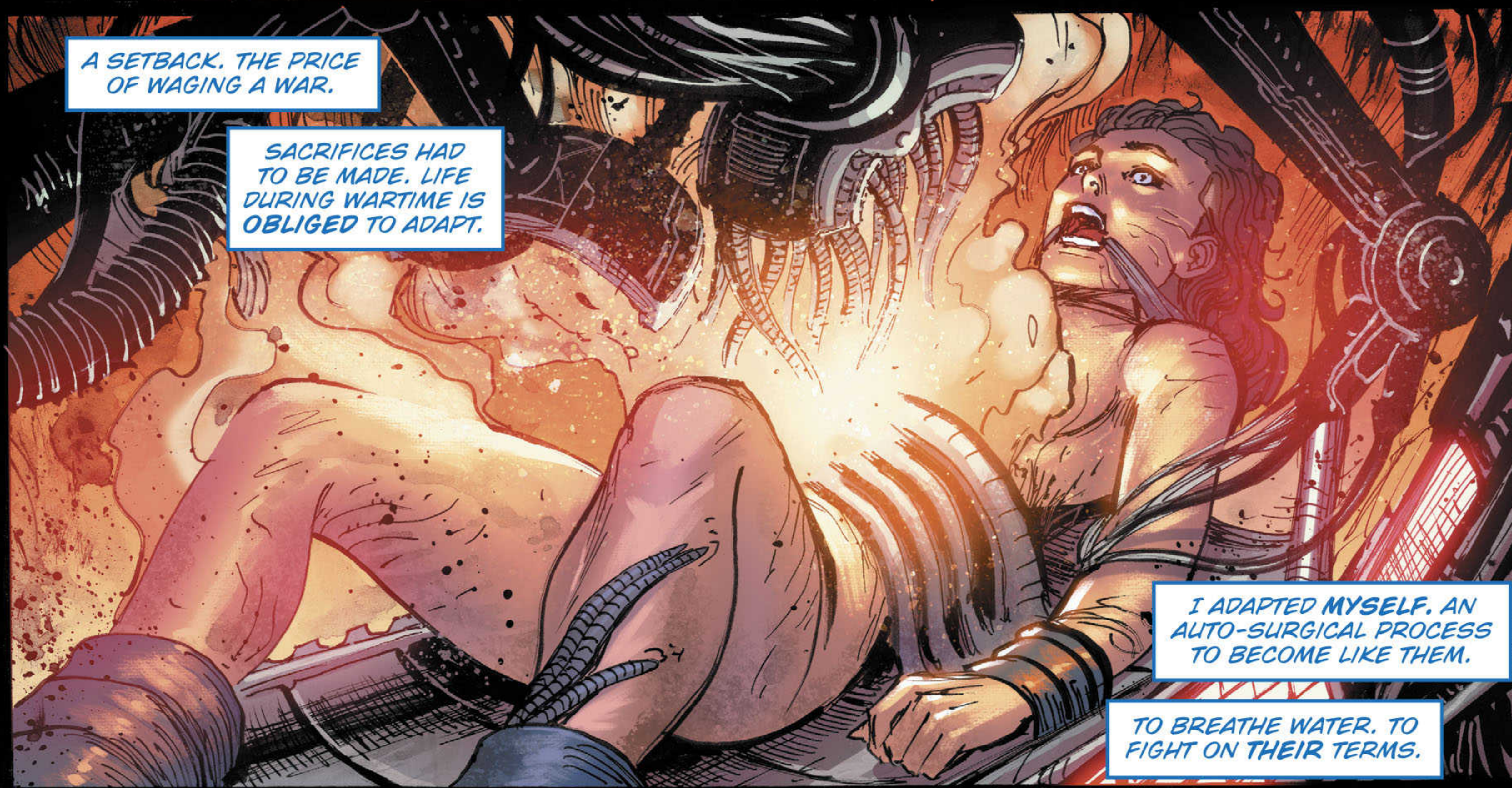




I HAD HOPED  
THEY WOULD GET  
THE MESSAGE.

THEY DID  
NOT.

THEIR RETALIATION  
DROWNED GOTHAM.

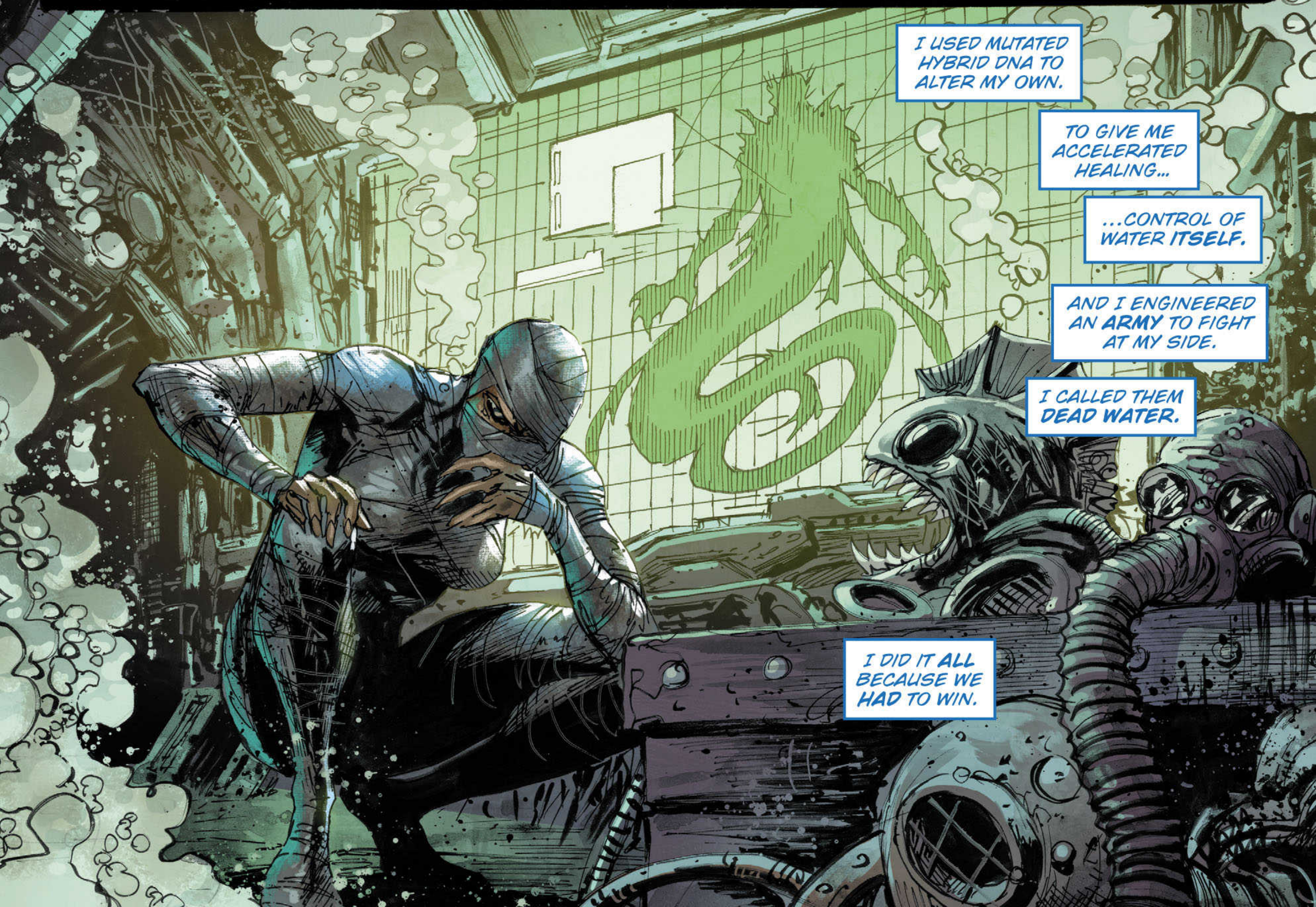


A SETBACK. THE PRICE  
OF WAGING A WAR.

SACRIFICES HAD  
TO BE MADE. LIFE  
DURING WARTIME IS  
OBLIGED TO ADAPT.

I ADAPTED MYSELF. AN  
AUTO-SURGICAL PROCESS  
TO BECOME LIKE THEM.

TO BREATHE WATER. TO  
FIGHT ON THEIR TERMS.



I USED MUTATED  
HYBRID DNA TO  
ALTER MY OWN.

TO GIVE ME  
ACCELERATED  
HEALING...

...CONTROL OF  
WATER ITSELF.

AND I ENGINEERED  
AN ARMY TO FIGHT  
AT MY SIDE.

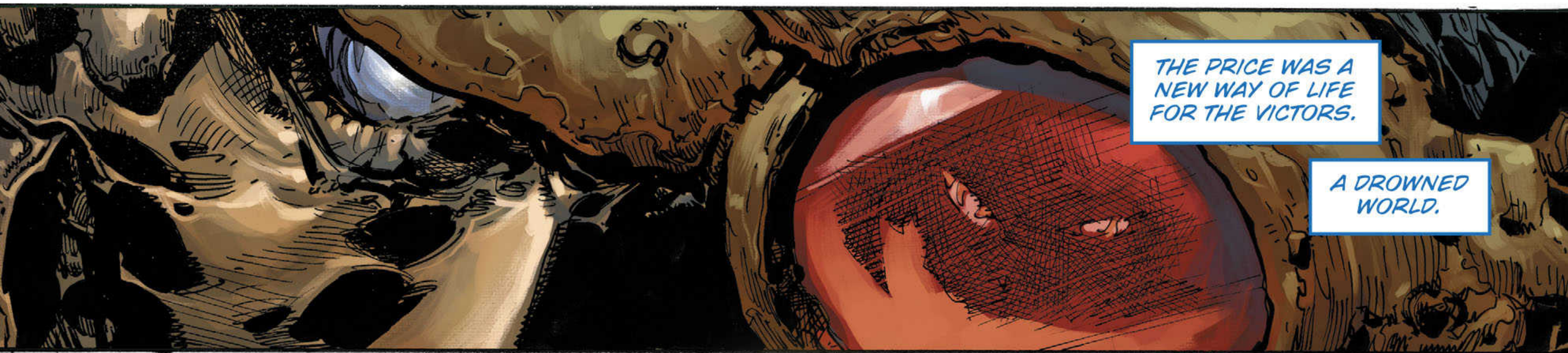
I CALLED THEM  
DEAD WATER.

I DID IT ALL  
BECAUSE WE  
HAD TO WIN.



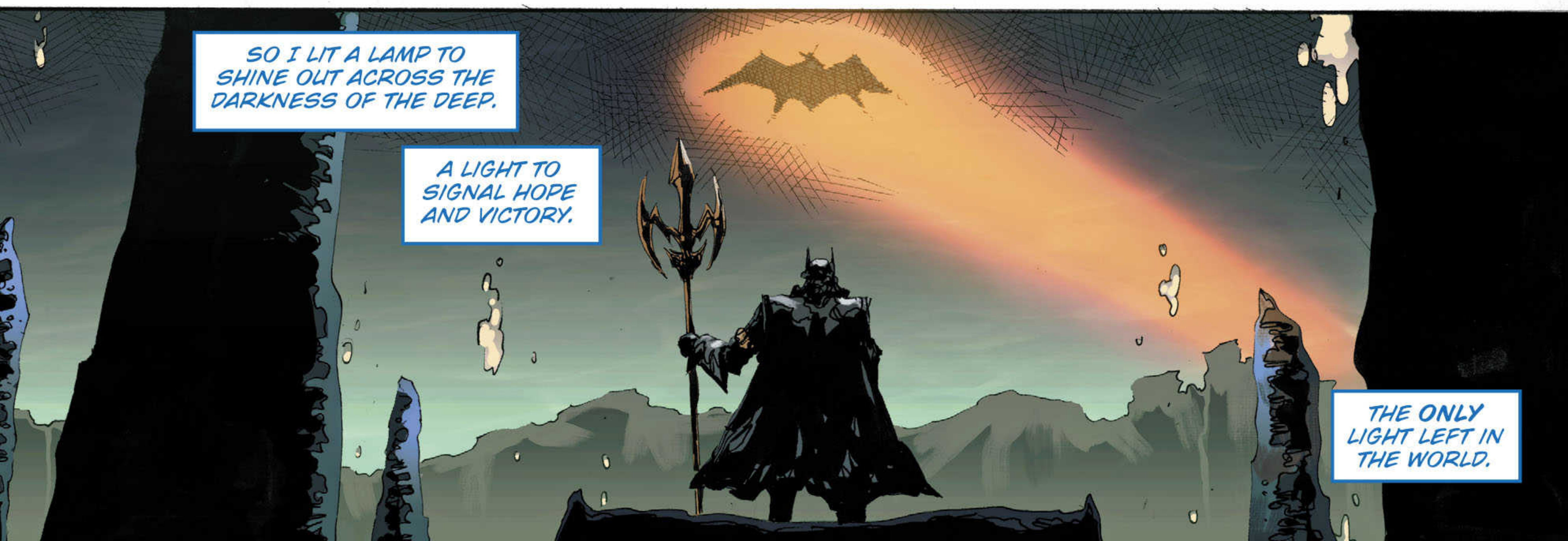


AND THANKS  
TO ME, WE DID.



THE PRICE WAS A  
NEW WAY OF LIFE  
FOR THE VICTORS.

A DROWNED  
WORLD.



SO I LIT A LAMP TO  
SHINE OUT ACROSS THE  
DARKNESS OF THE DEEP.

A LIGHT TO  
SIGNAL HOPE  
AND VICTORY.

THE ONLY  
LIGHT LEFT IN  
THE WORLD.

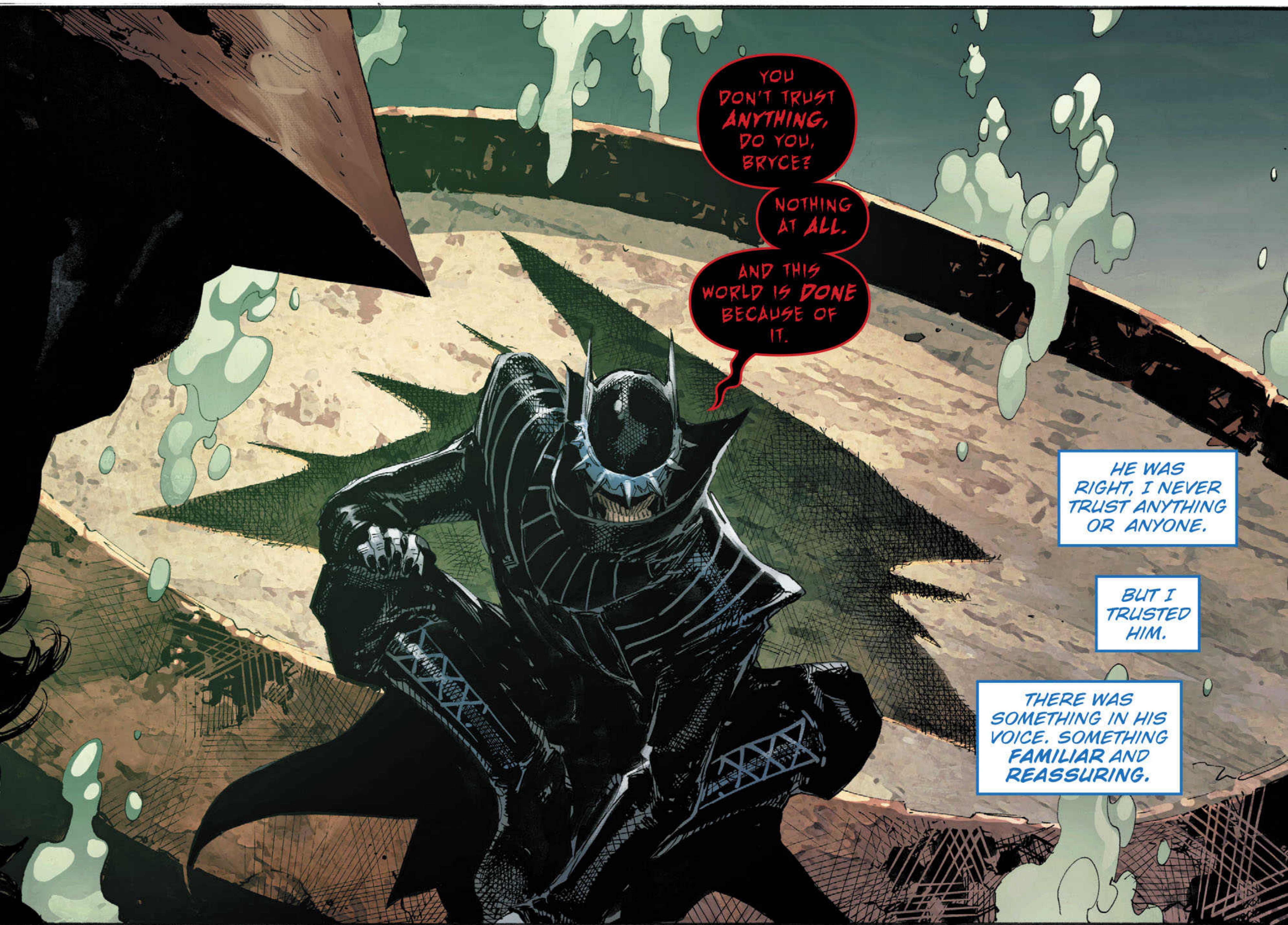




THEN, ONE  
NIGHT, THE  
SIGNAL FELL  
DARK.

I WENT TO REPAIR  
IT, AND HE WAS  
WAITING FOR ME...

...THE ONE  
WHO LAUGHS.



YOU  
DON'T TRUST  
ANYTHING,  
DO YOU,  
BRYCE?

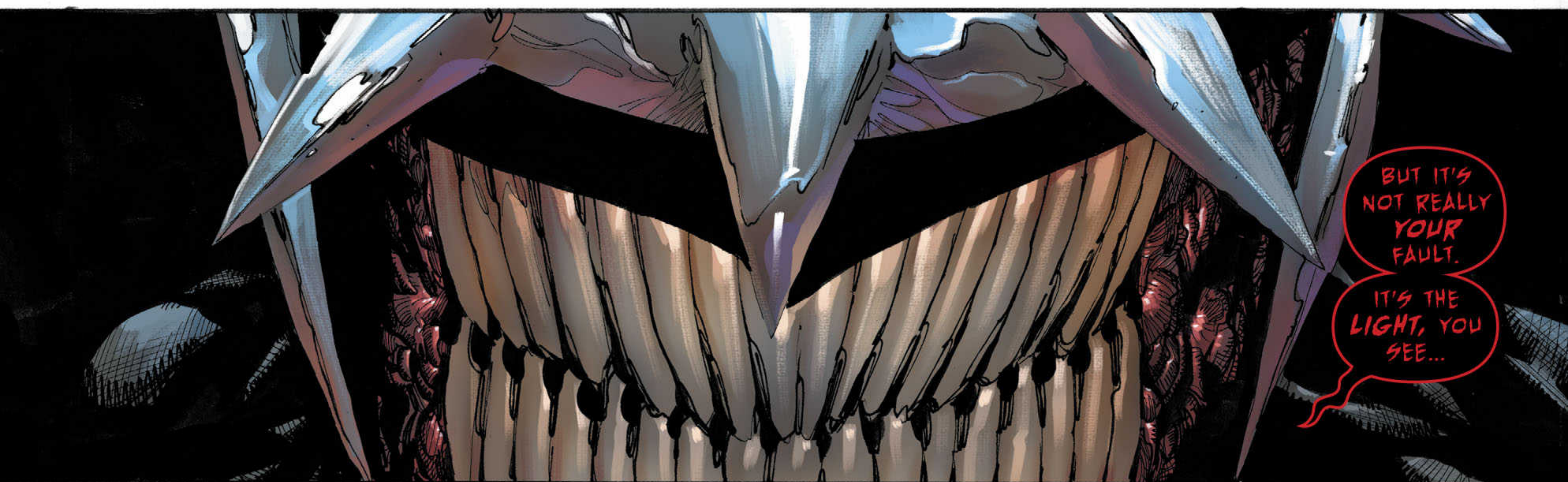
NOTHING  
AT ALL.

AND THIS  
WORLD IS **DONE**  
BECAUSE OF  
IT.

HE WAS  
RIGHT, I NEVER  
TRUST ANYTHING  
OR ANYONE.

BUT I  
TRUSTED  
HIM.

THERE WAS  
SOMETHING IN HIS  
VOICE. SOMETHING  
FAMILIAR AND  
REASSURING.



BUT IT'S  
NOT REALLY  
**YOUR**  
FAULT.

IT'S THE  
LIGHT, YOU  
SEE...





...THE  
LIGHT UP  
THERE.

AND HE  
SHOWED IT  
TO ME.

HE SHOWED ME THE  
LOWER-TIER WORLDS. THE  
MINUS REALMS OF THE  
DARK MULTIVERSE THAT  
HAD SUFFERED SO THAT  
THE LIGHT COULD THRIVE.

THE WORLDS AND THE  
PEOPLES THAT HAD PAID  
THE PRICE SO THAT THE  
WORLDS ABOVE US  
COULD FLOURISH.

AND HE  
SHOWED ME  
THE OTHERS  
LIKE ME.

OUTCAST ITERATIONS.  
DARK ECHOES OF A MAN  
WHO HAD TAKEN IT ALL.





AND HE  
LAUGHED.

YOU SEE  
THE LIGHT UP  
THERE? **RIGHT**  
UP THERE...?

...IT  
MOCKS US  
ALL.

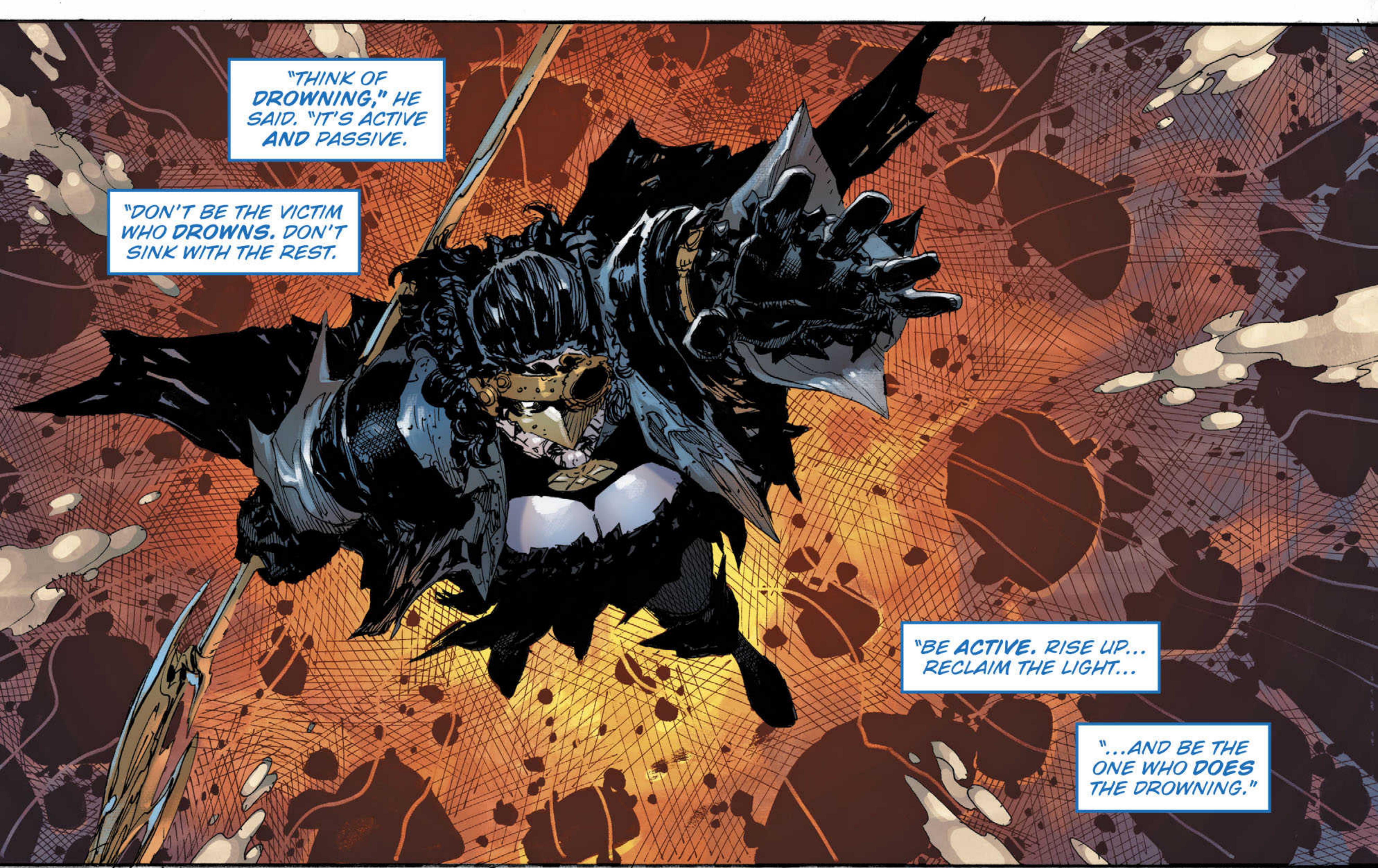
IT'S  
AN UNSULLIED  
MULTIVERSE WHERE  
ALL IS BRIGHT AND  
**ASCENDANT.**

IT'S **WHY**  
WE SUFFER. IT'S  
**WHY NOTHING** CAN  
EVER BE MADE  
RIGHT.



THAT  
WORLD IS THE  
**PERFECTION**  
YOU DREAM  
OF.

YOU ARE ITS  
**NIGHTMARE.**



"THINK OF  
DROWNING," HE  
SAID. "IT'S ACTIVE  
AND PASSIVE."

"DON'T BE THE VICTIM  
WHO DROWNS. DON'T  
SINK WITH THE REST."

"BE ACTIVE. RISE UP...  
RECLAIM THE LIGHT..."

"...AND BE THE  
ONE WHO DOES  
THE DROWNING."



# EARTH-0.

THAT'S WHY  
I'M HERE.

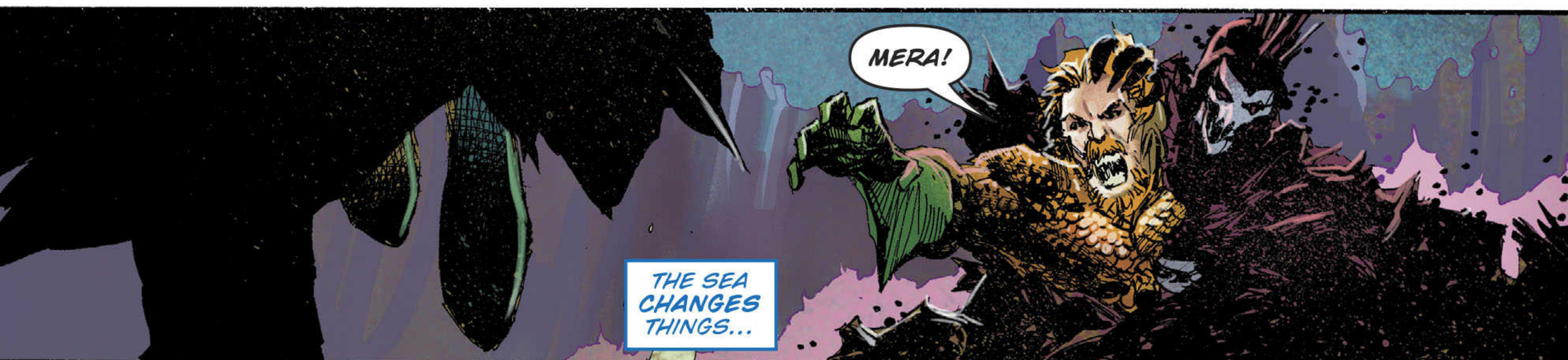
ARTHUR,  
WHAT IS  
SHE?

HOW DO  
WE **STOP**  
HER--?

MERA,  
**BEWARE--!**









...YOU CAN'T  
STOP IT.

MERGE WITH THE  
DEAD WATER...

...SUCCUMB TO  
THE INEVITABLE.

THAT'S HOW I  
MADE MY ARMY.  
THROUGH THE  
TRANSMUTING  
POWER OF THE  
SEA.

TO TURN  
THE TIDE OF  
LOYALTY.

TO DROWN  
OPPOSITION.

TO MAKE EVEN THE  
MOST RESISTANT  
FIGHT FOR ME.

NERA!

HE SCREAMS IN  
DESPAIR. I KNOW THAT  
FEELING. TO LOSE THE  
PERSON YOU LOVE.

HE IS GOING TO BE DEAD  
IN ANOTHER SECOND, AND  
THE PAIN WILL CEASE.

HOW FORTUNATE. I WISH  
I HAD DIED A FEW SECONDS  
AFTER SYLVESTER, SO I COULD  
HAVE BEEN SPARED THE--

WHAT HAVE  
YOU DONE TO  
HER? WHAT  
HAVE YOU  
DONE?





--WHAT IS  
THIS? MAGIC?

SOME SYMBOL I  
DON'T RECOGNIZE.

SOMEONE IS  
INTERVENING.



IT STEALS  
THE AQUAMAN  
FROM ME.

IT CHEATS  
THE DEATH I HAVE  
ARRANGED.



I WONDER  
WHERE IT'S  
TAKEN HIM.

MY SOLACE...HE'S  
ALIVE, AND WHEREVER  
HE'S GONE, HE'LL GET  
TO LIVE THAT PAIN.

UNTIL I FIND  
HIM AGAIN.





MY AMNESTY  
BEGINS HERE.

I LIGHT  
MY SIGNAL.

MY LIGHT...TO  
SHOW THIS WORLD  
MY INTENT...

...I'M GOING TO  
DROWN IT ALL.

THIS  
WHOLE  
WORLD.



TRUST ME  
ON THAT.

TO BE CONTINUED  
NEXT WEEK IN

**BATMAN**  
THE MERCILESS